

- (b) a unit for coding the spectral values with a code table having a limited number of code words of different lengths to obtain spectral values coded with code words, the length of a code word which is assigned to a spectral value generally being that much shorter the higher the probability of occurrence of the spectral value is;
- (c) a unit for determining a raster for the coded bit stream where the raster has equidistant raster points (10, 12, 14) and where the separation (D1) of the raster points depends on the code table;
- (d) defining priority code words among the code words, those code words which represent spectral values which are psychoacoustically important compared to other spectral values being defined as priority code words; and
- (e) a unit for positioning the priority code words a priority code word which represents a spectral value of the block of spectral values coincides with one raster point and the start of another priority code word which represents another spectral value of the block of spectral values coincides with another raster point.

22. A device according to claim 21, further comprising:

a unit for grouping the spectral values into adjacent spectral sections, each spectral section having at least one spectral value;

a unit for assigning at least two different code tables from a predetermined number of code tables to two differ-

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ent spectral sections, a spectral section having assigned to it that code table which is best suited for coding the spectral values in the spectral section;

where the unit for coding is designed to code the spectral values from the spectral sections with the code table which is assigned to the corresponding spectral section,

where the unit for specifying is designed to specify a raster for the coded bit stream such that the raster has at least two groups of raster points, such that the raster points of each group are spaced equidistantly from one another and such that the raster point distance of each group depends on an appropriate code table from among the at least two different code tables.

23. A method for decoding a bit stream representing a coded audio signal, where the coded bit stream contains code words of different lengths from a code table and has a raster with equidistant raster points, where the code words include priority code words, which represent particular spectral values of a block of spectral values which are psychoacoustically important compared to other spectral values, where the block of spectral values represents a spectrum of a block of temporal samples of the audio signal and where priority code words are aligned with raster points, so that the start of a priority code word representing a spectral value of the block of spectral values coincides with one raster point and the start of another priority code word representing another spectral value of the block of spectral values coincides with another raster point, comprising the following steps:

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- (a) detecting the distance between two adjacent raster points;
- (b) resorting the priority code words, which are aligned with the raster points, in the coded bit stream in such a way as to obtain a linear arrangement of the same with frequency, the start of a priority code word coinciding with a raster point;
- (c) decoding the priority code words with an associated code table to obtain decoded spectral values; and
- (d) transforming the decoded spectral values back into the time domain to obtain a decoded audio signal.

24. A method according to claim 23, where the coded bit stream contains code words of different lengths from at least two code tables and has a raster with at least two groups of equidistant raster points including the following steps:

identifying the code table associated with a spectral section; and

where, in the step of decoding, the priority code words of a spectral section are decoded with the corresponding associated code table.

25. A device for for decoding a bit stream representing a coded audio signal, where the coded bit stream contains code words of different lengths from a code table and has a raster with equidistant raster points, where the code words include priority code words, which represent particular spectral values of a block of spectral values which are psychoacoustically important compared to other spectral values, where the block of spectral values repre-

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